



Family and Consumer Sciences

Strengthening Oklahoma Families

Pittsburg County OSU Extension

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There's More Than Love in the Air During February

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For many Americans, the month of February is all about the heart and its symbolism of love for one another. However, it also is a time to show yourself some love by learning about the risks of cardiovascular disease (CVD), including heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke, in an effort to stay healthy.

February is American Heart Month and this is the perfect time to focus on what people can do to help prevent CVD, said Janice Hermann, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension nutrition specialist.

“CVD is the number one killer of women and men in the United States, with an estimated 83.6 million American adults having one or more types of CVD,” Hermann said. “It’s the leading cause of disability and prevents people from working and enjoying family activities.”

In addition, CVD costs more than \$300 billion each year, including the cost of health care services, medications and lost productivity.

Having a close family member who has heart disease puts you at a higher risk for CVD. Geographical location also plays a role. Death rates due to heart disease were highest in the south and lowest in the west. Another contributing factor is race and ethnicity. Nearly 44 percent of African American men and 48 percent of African American women have a form of CVD. They also are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to have high blood pressure and develop CVD earlier in life.

“Many CVD deaths could have been prevented through healthier habits, healthier living spaces and better management of conditions such as high

blood pressure and diabetes,” Hermann said. “Fortunately there are steps you can take to help control the risk factors. There is no ‘magic pill,’ so it’s important to not become overwhelmed when trying to keep CVD under control.”

Some of the risk factors that you can control include diet, physical activity, tobacco use, obesity, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and diabetes. As you look at the whole picture, keep in mind that every step you take in the right direction will bring you closer to a healthier heart.

Hermann suggests taking a friend or family member on the journey with you.

“Find a partner to help you make good food choices and keep you on track for your exercise goals,” she said. “The journey is a lot more fun – and usually more successful – if you don’t go it alone. And remember, it’s important to not get discouraged. Take it one step at a time. You might want to start with changing your diet to incorporate healthier foods. After that, add in some exercise. This is a journey, not a race.”

Before making big changes in your lifestyle, it is important to get a health screening. A doctor, nurse or other health care professional can check for conditions that put you at risk for CVD. Surprisingly, some of the risk factors for CVD can go unnoticed for many years. This is why it is important to get a physical checkup before starting the journey.

“While many people focus on February as the month of love, focus on your heart health in an effort to become and stay healthy for years to come,” Hermann said.



Plump for the Goodness of Plums

Many of us are unaware that there are actually over 200 varieties of plums available. Here are a few tips on plums plus a recipe on the back page:

- ◆ **Plums and B Vitamins:** Whatever the variety, plums are rich in B vitamins, especially vitamins B1, B2 and B6. In turn, B vitamins are needed to keep you energetic, strengthen your immunity and help you cope with stresses in life.
- ◆ **Plums, Antioxidants and Cancer:** Plums are also rich in antioxidants neochlorogenic and chlorogenic acid. These phenols have been well-documented for their antioxidant and anticancer benefits. In other words, plums

can give you oxidative protection against free radicals in your body..

- ◆ **Plums and Heart Disease:** Dried plums or prunes are also rich in soluble fibers, which can help to lower your “bad” cholesterol levels.
- ◆ **Plums, Vitamins and Minerals:** Both plums and prunes are rich in vitamin C, which is needed for good immunity, the manufacture of neuro-transmitting substances and hormones, as well as the absorption and utilization of other nutritional factors in our food. Dried plums or prunes are especially rich in

potassium, which is useful for helping to lower blood pressure.

Potassium is also crucial in maintaining water-balance in your body, as well as ensuring the healthy functions of your muscles, nerves, heart, kidney and adrenal glands.



Seeing More Red this Valentine Month/Year

“Seeing red is not necessary bad when it comes to these fabulous red fruits”

Fruits like tart cherries, watermelon, raspberries, and other red gems not only boost metabolism, but strengthen the immune system and lower cholesterol.

- **Ruby Red** Grapefruit can lower bad cholesterol and burn tummy fat. It is loaded with vitamin C to help the immune system. It contains carotenoid phytonutrient.
- **Tart Cherries** can help reduce inflammation, lower blood sugar. Adding fruit into your diet can help

with weight loss due to the high fiber content.

- **Plums** there again, could lower cholesterol, protect your heart and contains 113 of potassium. Plums can also ward off free-radicals that we are exposed to in our environment and are ranked low on the glycemic index.
- **Watermelons** are 92% water and are more than a refreshing treat for a hot summer’s day. It flushes out toxins in the kidneys

and has a good amount of potassium and vitamin B6.

- **Raspberries**—we all love raspberries even more after finding what they can also do to keep you healthy. The phytonutrients could decrease the risk of fatty liver and prevent help lose weight.

Pittsburg County OHCE Newsletter



Rethink Your Drink

Source: *Oklahoma State University*

People who drink soft drinks take in more calories than those who do not. Drinking sugar-sweetened beverages has been associated with weight gain, overweight, obesity and type 2 diabetes. A 12-oz can of soda has 150 calories and 10 teaspoons of sugar in the form of high fructose corn syrup. If these calories are added to the typical diet without cutting back on something else, one soda a day could lead to a weight



gain of 15 pounds in one year. Sports drinks, another popular soft drink, are for athletes who participate in high-intensity, aerobic exercise for at least 90 minutes. Most kids are not this active. The added sugar and sodium in sports drinks are unnecessary for children and youth.

Try these tips to help you and your family “re-think” your drink:

- ◆ Help children learn to enjoy water as the thirst quencher of choice.
- ◆ Make soft drinks a “sometimes” beverage to be enjoyed in moderate amounts.
- ◆ Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator for easy access.
- ◆ Add lemon, lime, other fruit, or a splash of juice to water.

Your Invited to the Upcoming OHCE Awards Banquet



Date: February 24, 2015

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: OSU Extension Office

Cost: \$5.00 Due before Feb. 16 (*Please turn your money in to your President/Treasurer at your February group meeting*)

Theme: Italy / Italian

Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, salad and bread. Each group is to bring two desserts.



Plum Bread

2 cups diced plums (*nectarines or peaches can also be used*)
3 cups flour 1 cup butter
1-1/2 cups sugar 1 tsp vanilla
4 eggs 1 tsp salt
1 tsp cream of tartar 1 tsp baking soda
3/4 cup vanilla yogurt

Directions: Cream butter sugar & vanilla together until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beat after each addition. Sift together flour, salt, cream of tartar and baking soda. Add about 1/3 of the yogurt to the mixture, alternating until all is added. Fill two greased & floured bread pans 1/2 full with batter, then add 1/4 of the fruit of each pan, then the remaining batter & top with the remaining fruit.

Bake at 350 degrees for about 50-55 minutes. Cool in the pan for about 15 minutes & turn onto a platter. Makes two loaves and freezes well.

Nutrition Info: Calories from fat 961; Total fat 106.8g; Saturated fat 63g; Total carbs 318.1g; Dietary fiber 7.3g; Sugars 171.5g; Protein 37.2g.

Potato & Double-Corn Chowder

1 bag (16 oz.) frozen hash brown potatoes, thawed
1 can (15.25oz) whole kernel corn, undrained
1 can (14.75 oz) cream style corn
1 can (12oz) evaporated milk
1 medium onion, chopped
8 slices bacon, crisply cooked & crumbled
1/2 tsp salt 1/2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1/4 tsp pepper

Directions: In 3 1/2 to 6-quart slow cooker, mix all ingredients. Cover and cook on low heat setting 6 to 8 hours (or high heat setting 3 to 4 hours) to develop flavors.



Nutrition Info: Calories from fat 70; Saturated fat 3g; Cholesterol 15mg; Sodium 730mg; Carbs 55g; Protein 11g;

Note: The bacon adds that good smoky flavor to this chowder, but it does lose its crispness when added at the beginning. If you want the crisp texture, stir it in at the end of cooking instead.

Feb 13 Baby Fair Meeting—Health Dept.
at 8 a.m.

Feb 17 4-County Leader Lesson
(LeFlore Co) leave OSU parking
8 a.m. Pre-register by Feb. 13 at
918.423.4120 OSU McA. There
is a \$5 cost. **Topics presented
will be:** “An Apple a Day,
Meeting in a Nutshell and
Downsizing Your Home”

Feb 24 OHCE Awards Banquet 
(Complete details on
page 3 of this newsletter)

Feb 25-28 Pittsburg Co Stock Show

March 14 Photos to Fabric (*flyer attached*)

March 17 OHCE District Meeting

**Always Give Honest
and Sincere
Appreciation.
Dale Carnegie**

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